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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT: Military Division's China 1980 Paper

1. Despite the already lengthy coordination on this paper, several serious divergencies of opinion remain. With the slim data base available, this may be inevitable as each person views the problem differently. As Bruce Clarke has stated, participants have in some cases expressed diametrically opposed views.

2. In my opinion the paper must more forcefully express this situation, rather than pick one group of assumptions and take off on a rather extensive list of tasks which we then postulate that the Chinese possibly could accomplish.

3. Our major objections are these:

a. We question the basic assumption that China feels it must within the next 10 years have a credible strategic deterrent against the U.S. A stronger case could be made, we believe, for development of an advanced weapons capability against its neighbors in Southeast Asia, including U.S. overseas bases.

b. Paragraph two lists five assumptions which apparently are to remain operative for 15 years. Almost any one of these may be a false assumption, and it is extremely unlikely that all five will prove to be correct.

c. The question of the development of an ICBM is not phrased to express our present views. While the Chinese might develop an ICBM, and even fire one or two for propaganda effect and to establish their "deterrent" value, we do not believe they can develop an effective operational ICBM system in this time period.

d. Paragraphs 13-16 list delivery systems the Chinese might be able to develop. This should, it seems to me, be followed by a paragraph to the effect that they are neither likely nor able to develop all of these more

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or less simultaneously. The "mix" table in paragraph 17 suggests that all will be developed concurrently whereas we believe that they may have to concentrate on a limited number.

e. We feel there is a possibility that the Chinese might limit development of liquid missiles and concentrate on solids, which could be used in submarines as a "deterrent against the US," at least the West Coast! Whether this could be carried out in 15 years, however, is again highly questionable.

f. The paper is constructed so that most attention is drawn to the worst possible case with a last paragraph tacked on to express a "more modest option." Isn't it more likely that the Chinese will be forced to choose a course considerably less ambitious than the one described? Shouldn't the paper emphasize the more likely course, and delegate the worst possible situation to a "tacked on" paragraph? I have a feeling that the present paper is more an exercise in arithmetic than intelligence analysis.

4. Because of these basic differences on assumptions and because of serious technical uncertainties, I do not feel that OSI can approve this present version. Possibly it can be modified to reflect the differences of view in the Agency, but I seriously question if this type of paper is the proper vehicle for airing our lack of agreement in interpretation of a very sparse data base. On such an important subject I believe that more time is needed to perform analysis and develop a stronger basis for a long term projection. I therefore recommend against proceeding with the paper as now drafted.



Acting Assistant Director
Scientific Intelligence

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